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S E C R E T ALGIERS 001542

SIPDIS

NSC FOR POUNDS AND ABRAMS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/24/2015

TAGS: [PTER](#) [PREL](#) [WI](#) [AG](#) [MO](#)

SUBJECT: (S) BELKHEIR STRESSES NEED FOR MOROCCO TO MOVE ON
WESTERN SAHARA; OFFERS COOPERATION TO DISRUPT TERRORIST
NETWORKS IN MOROCCO AND EUROPE

REF: A. STATE 134891

[B](#). ALGIERS 1508

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Marc Sievers, Reason 1.4 (b) (d)

[11](#). (C) Charge delivered ref (a) points confirming that the USG has no intention at this time of designating the Polisario as a terrorist organization to Presidential Chief of Staff Larbi Belkheir July 23. Noting that U.S. policy toward the Polisario remained unchanged, Charge also stressed our request for Algerian assistance in reinforcing the need for the Polisario to refrain from statements or actions that provoked Morocco.

[12](#). (C) Belkheir expressed appreciation for the confirmation of U.S. policy. He said the Polisario had never been a terrorist organization, but was a movement for national liberation. It was true that Polisario officials from time to time threatened to resume "armed struggle" against Morocco, but it was important to understand the great pressure they were under due to the prolonged diplomatic stalemate since Baker's resignation and the difficult living conditions in Tindouf. It was essential, he said, that "Morocco budge too" or the situation could deteriorate. Charge reiterated that Algeria should discourage Polisario from provoking Morocco.

[13](#). (C) Turning to Algerian relations with Morocco, Belkheir said Algeria wanted better relations with Morocco, which Charge agreed was U.S. policy as well. Algeria supported the UN's efforts to resolve the Western Sahara dispute, most recently by signalling its acceptance of Kofi Annan's proposed candidate for a new Special Envoy, although Belkheir said he was not sure what the Moroccan position was. Algeria's view was that efforts to settle the Western Sahara should be handled in a UN context; other than the Western Sahara, there was no reason that Moroccan-Algerian relations could not improve across the board. "Better bilateral relations are even more in Morocco's interest than they are in ours," Belkheir commented. Charge responded that they were in both countries' interest, especially since regional cooperation continued to founder on the obstacle of Moroccan-Algerian mutual suspicions.

[14](#). (S) Belkheir assured Charge that Algeria was "committed to Morocco's stability and security." Morocco, he said, should pay greater attention to the Islamist terrorist networks that had developed on its territory and that were in turn linked to networks in Europe. Algeria had considerable expertise in this area that it was willing to share with the Moroccans if the Moroccans would engage the Algerians.

[15](#). (S) Comment: While we defer to Embassy Rabat as to the extent to which Morocco may be willing to engage in counterterrorism exchanges given existing tensions between the two countries, from an Algiers perspective we believe Belkheir's offer provides a genuine opportunity to improve counterterrorism cooperation, which could in turn help create a new political opening.

SIEVERS